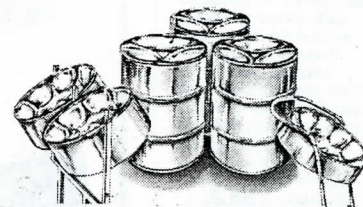


# Pannists in the rapso too

ML1040



By TERRY JOSEPH

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**L**ONG BEFORE the invention of Panorama, panmen were playing a kind of rapso, using phonetics with a rhythm to imitate their instruments, much like the beat-box style of early American rap artistes.

In a recent interview, Brother Resistance, the major crusader for the rapso art form, was identifying groups and persons who contributed to the development of the oral tradition.

"They called it a mouth band", he said, adding "one version of the story of how it came about suggests that when the old pan players were leaving the pan yard to go home, they attempted to re-create the sound of the pans to provide themselves with a propulsive rhythm for the walk.

"One would take the bass-noise for himself, while others would mouth the notes of the tenors or second pans or other areas of the steel-band.

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These mouth bands became so good at reporting the musical stories of the panyard, that they then turned their talents to the brass bands, going by fetes where the brass bands played and learning the parts, so that they could go back to the panyards and transpose the notes from their mouths, through their hands, to the pans.

So while there were no words, it often was left to this aspect of the oral traditions to keep groups of people together on the way home after parties or on visits to the panyards.

"It's all part of the rapso tradition", says Brother Resistance "and we must not allow our children to forget these things or they will remember only those stimuli which come from foreign countries (like the beat box style).

"People must stand firm for their culture."